

2025-2026

# HISTORY NEWSLETTER



Department of History  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

# 2025 Photography Contest Winners

## FIRST PLACE (Cover Photo)

**David Marchionni**

“Canals at Middy”

Downtown Amsterdam

## SECOND PLACE (Page 9)

**Claire Schmidt**

Parthenon

Athens, Greece

## THIRD PLACE (Page 14)

**Will Chiampas**

“A New Horizon”

British Museum

London, England

## FOURTH PLACE (Page 19)

**Jayson Otto**

“The Last Believer and the Fruits of His Labor”

Israelite House of David

Benton Harbor, Michigan

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

# Dr. Michael Stamm



I am very pleased to introduce this year's annual newsletter from the Michigan State University History Department. 2025 has been an exceptionally challenging year for everyone in the department, and I am proud of how our community — faculty, staff, and students — has responded. Despite the difficulties that we have all encountered this year, members in our department remain committed to their important work.

As educators and scholars, my faculty colleagues and I form a group of 41 tenure-track professors, and our community is enriched by the 12 teaching-focused faculty who also do amazing work with our students. Faculty expertise spans the globe from the ancient world to the very recent past, and my colleagues are producing pathbreaking scholarship in multiple fields. We all were thrilled to welcome two new colleagues this year in Professor Louis Moore and Assistant Professor Peter Thompson.

History faculty had many tremendous achievements in 2025. Three faculty — Emily Conroy-Krutz, Emine Evered, and Charles Keith — were promoted to Professor. Nwando Achebe was named University Distinguished Professor, one of MSU's highest honors. LaShawn Harris published *Tell Her Story: Eleanor Bumpurs & the Police Killing That Galvanized New York City*, and Shayan Rajani published *Leaving Legacies: The Individual in Early Modern South Asia*. Yulian Wu was awarded a fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Study. These are just a few of the significant faculty accomplishments this year.

The History Department remains a leader in the field of digital humanities, and there were many noteworthy achievements and events in 2025. Professor Walter Hawthorne was named Director of Matrix: Center for Digital Humanities & Social Sciences, succeeding our colleague Dean Rehberger in that role. Matrix continues to promote some of the country's leading digital history projects, including *Enslaved.org*, which contributes to the study of the historic slave trade, and Professor Helen Veit's *America in the Kitchen*, which is providing digital access to 200 of the most significant cookbooks in American history. Under Gillian MacDonald's energetic leadership, the Lab for the Education and Advancement in Digital Research (LEADR) celebrated its tenth year of operation and remains a tremendous supporter of our research and teaching missions.

The 40 graduate students in the History Department continue to research and write the scholarship that will shape the futures of their fields. We were very happy to welcome a cohort of nine new doctoral students in the fall. Eight students defended their dissertations in 2025, and graduates took faculty positions at North Carolina State University and Michigan State University, postdoctoral fellowships at the University of California–Los Angeles and the University of Basel, and positions in digital humanities at the University of Central Florida and Omeka.

Our undergraduates are inspiring presences in the department in the work that they do in and out of the classroom. We have 324 majors in the department, all of whom are cultivating understandings of the past that we know will guide them in their future endeavors. Like our graduate students, our undergraduates are also engaged in important original research, and I was deeply impressed by the four students who presented their work in April at the department's annual Honors Thesis Showcase. The event was organized by Professor Emily Conroy-Krutz, who works with each student and a second faculty mentor over the course of the year to develop an original work of historical scholarship. The quality of the scholarship that these students presented was exceptionally high, and it was a terrific capstone to their undergraduate careers. Many of our students are pursuing the History: Social Studies Education major, through which the department collaborates with the College of Education in what has been one of our most important contributions to the state of Michigan. While maintaining scholarly excellence as globally informed researchers, MSU History faculty and graduate students promote the public interest through teaching honest understandings of the past to future Michigan teachers.

The History Department's work would not be possible without the contributions of our terrific staff members. Alyssa Hartley has done an exceptional job as Academic Programs Coordinator and Graduate and Undergraduate Administrator, and we were joined by three new colleagues this year. Louisa Lee has done tremendous work as our Business Manager, a position which supports just about everything that we do in the department. Communications Manager Kelly Smith has done an amazing job of refreshing and expanding our communications and outreach efforts, including this newsletter. Undergraduate Advisor Troy Villanueva has been crucial to the success of our students and our undergraduate program. I'm always happy to come to the office and work with this group.

Despite the difficulties of 2025, the History Department has maintained a record of excellence, and we are excited to continue to do so in what we hope is an even better 2026.



## A legacy of adaptation and mentorship: Honoring Dr. Susan Sleeper-Smith

On October 10, 2025, Dr. Susan Sleeper-Smith was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Society for Ethnohistory in San Antonio, Texas. From left to right: Justin Carroll (MSU History Ph.D., 2011), Jacob Jurs (MSU History Ph.D., 2017), Susan Sleeper-Smith, Karen Marrero, Joe Genetin-Pilawa (MSU History Ph.D., 2008), Jim Buss. Photo provided by Joe Genetin-Pilawa.

By Kelly Smith

Dr. Susan Sleeper-Smith didn't set out to become a leading voice in American Indian history. In fact, her path to the field was anything but linear. It was shaped by a passion for preservation and a remarkable ability to adapt.

Now, as she receives a Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Society for Ethnohistory, her colleagues and former students are celebrating not just her scholarship, but the profound legacy she's built as a mentor.

"Susan's influence on my career and life cannot be overstated," said Dr. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa, associate professor of History at George Mason University, and one of Dr. Sleeper-Smith's first Ph.D. students. "Her impact on me has extended far beyond learning about historiographical debates and research methodologies. I am who I am as a historian, but also as a teacher, mentor, colleague, and community member because she is who she is."

### Reframing the Historical Narrative

Dr. Sleeper-Smith retired from Michigan State University's Department of History in 2021, after

teaching for nearly 30 years. Her body of work spans seven books, more than 44 articles and book reviews, and over 110 presentations and community lectures. Her 2018 book, *Indigenous Prosperity and American Conquest: Indian Women in the Ohio River Valley, 1690–1792*, earned honorable mention for the Ray Allen Billington Prize from the Organization of American Historians.

Through her research, she has reshaped how historians understand Indigenous women's roles — not only in the fur trade, land ownership, and resistance to removal, but also within the broader narrative of cultural exchange and transformation. Her work highlights how encounters between Indigenous communities and settler colonists created enduring social change, particularly in the Great Lakes region.

Her scholarship has also reached beyond academia. She's been featured on C-SPAN's *American History TV*, Chicago Public Radio, and podcasts like *Ben Franklin's World* and *New Books in Native American Studies*. But for Dr. Sleeper-Smith, the heart of her work has always been her students.

"I think the most rewarding part of my career has been watching

students grow," she said. "Seeing all their successes and even their failures and how they've learned or taken a risk. Maybe it worked out, or maybe it didn't, but you're watching that path, their trajectory. That's amazing. That's what I've loved about teaching."

### Guiding with Grace

That mentorship has left a lasting mark on many students — among them, Aaron Luedtke, whom Dr. Sleeper-Smith fondly recalled. When he arrived at MSU from Lehigh University, Aaron was married with three children and a vague idea of writing about the 19th-century frontier. "It's very brave to go back to graduate school when you have three children," Dr. Sleeper-Smith said. "But he opened up, and he really blossomed in the CIC program," she said, referring to the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC)-American Indian Studies Consortium, which she directed from 2008 to 2012.

Her empathy for students navigating questions of identity and belonging stems from her own experience. Dr. Sleeper-Smith's mother was Sámi, an Indigenous person from Tromsø, Norway. "She never spoke Sámi unless she was alone with my grandmother," she said. "I've always had a sense of what it's like to distance yourself from your background."

That understanding helped her support students like Aaron, who went on to meet other Native students, find pride in his identity as a descendant of tribal chiefs, and conduct important work with the Haudenosaunee in New York. Today, Dr. Luedtke is at Syracuse University, where he has received multiple awards for his community-engaged scholarship.

### A Career Built on Reinvention

Dr. Sleeper-Smith's path to academia was far from traditional. After starting graduate school at the University of Wisconsin, she quickly realized it wasn't the right fit and returned to New York City, where she launched literacy programs in public schools and later worked in juvenile justice. A move to Iowa led to a role in the governor's office, where she helped develop a statewide corrections master plan.

Her career took another turn in Rochester, New York, where she taught criminal justice and started a successful historic preservation business, restoring 18th- and 19th-century homes. When her family relocated to Michigan, she seized the opportunity to pursue a Ph.D. at the University of Michigan, focusing on colonial history, art history, and historic preservation. Although American Indian Studies wasn't her original focus, a transformative course — and the encouragement of her dissertation committee — led her to explore Indigenous women's histories. "They told me, 'We don't know anything about this, but we want you to write about it,'" she said.

After earning her Ph.D., she joined MSU's Department of History. Early on, she trained graduate students through a now-defunct American Studies program, which allowed them to work across history, preservation, and Indigenous studies. But when she realized the university lacked the infrastructure to support American Indian Studies, she helped build it — founding the CIC-American Indian Studies Consortium and later directing the D'Arcy McNickle Center for American Indian and Indigenous Studies at the Newberry Library in Chicago for a year.

"MSU has always had a kind of flexibility that allows you to do what's good for the profession and good for the students," she said.

"If you want to do something, you need to find a way to do it. That's the lesson I've learned. Whether it's starting over in another state or building a consortium from scratch, you just go out and do it."

### The Work Lives On

Today, Dr. Sleeper-Smith continues her research on Indigenous women who resisted removal and retained land through treaty rights. Her current book project traces the lives of women like Marie Bailey, who ran fur trade operations and titled land in their Christian names to circumvent legal restrictions. "These women were farmers, traders, and leaders," she said. "They're not in the history books — but they should be."

As she reflected on her career, Dr. Sleeper-Smith doesn't point to a single favorite memory. Instead, she speaks of moments, like sitting with a student who shared his creative comic book work or hearing from a former student who left California to teach in South Africa.

"There's something about working with students that's different than having your own kids," she said. "They let you be completely open. They tell you amazing things. They become part of your story, just as you became part of theirs."

And that, she said, is the true reward.



Top: Susan Sleeper-Smith and Cynthia Radding, faculty emerita at UNC Chapel Hill, also a recipient of the ASE's Lifetime Achievement Award. Photo provided by Susan Sleeper-Smith.

Above: Susan Sleeper-Smith accepting the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Society for Ethnohistory. Photo provided by T. Wyatt Reynolds (Chickasaw Nation), Ph.D. candidate, Columbia University.



Susan Sleeper-Smith and former student Justin Carroll (MSU History Ph.D., 2011), now a faculty member at Indiana University. Photo provided by Susan Sleeper-Smith.



Photo credit: Katherine Dyal

## SPOTLIGHT ON FUTURE HISTORIANS:

# Katherine Dyal

By Kelly Smith

Meet Katherine Dyal, a University Distinguished Scholar and College of Social Science Scholar, who will graduate from Michigan State University in 2028. With majors in Global History and Russian, and active roles at H-Net and on the HSTAR Leadership Team, Katherine is shaping a strong academic path and successful future. In this spotlight, she shares what sparked her passion for history, how MSU has supported her journey, and where she hopes it will lead.

### What inspired you to pursue double majors in Global History and Russian?

When I started high school, I took AP Human Geography, which sparked my interest in world history, culture, and geography, especially after growing up very sheltered. We read *Animal Farm* in my English class which inspired me to start learning about the Russian Revolution of 1917. I started checking out books from my local library about Russian history and then branched out to other subjects in world history. Since then, I have fallen in love with the past and never looked back.

### How has being a University Distinguished Scholar and Social Science Scholar shaped your experience at MSU?

I've met some of the most amazing people through being a University Distinguished Scholar, including my boyfriend, so I will always be grateful not only for the university's support of my education but the connections I've made through it as well.

I am also deeply grateful to the Social Science Scholars program, mostly for the opportunity to hold writers' workshops where we meet to discuss our writing! I am and have always been a writer, and I love the opportunity to

connect with other writers and share our work. The Scholars program has so many amazing people, and I am grateful for the opportunities and mentorship that I wouldn't have otherwise. For instance, the program director, Dr. Waller, recommended me for my current job at H-Net and has gone out of his way to provide me the chance to conduct an independent study in history and prepare for my Ph.D. applications.

### Can you talk about your involvement with H-Net and the HSTAR Leadership Team?

I'm a student employee at H-Net: Social Sciences and Humanities, an online organization for academics to connect and develop their scholarship in a wide variety of disciplines. As a student employee, I work on home office tasks like ingesting academic books into our database, moderating posts on academic forums, and facilitating the training of network editors. I also have the chance to create dynamic content related to history online and improve my own scholarship at H-Net. I am so lucky to have an on-campus job that engages with my major and to work with so many amazing people!

On the H-STAR Leadership Team, I have met new and prospective Honors College students and connect with future Spartans. I love speaking on panels about my experiences... if there is any chance at all that my words will help somebody make a decision or find an opportunity they otherwise would not have.

### Any classes or professors who have made a lasting impact on you so far?

This semester, I'm taking HST 344, A History of Russia in the 20th Century, with Professor Matthew Pauly, and it has transformed my perspective on studying Russian history. Russian history cannot be understood without also understanding

the histories of Ukraine, Belarus, the Cossacks, and all the other nationalities that made up the Russian and Soviet Empires. I am learning a lot that goes far beyond the traditional narrative of Russian history I've previously studied, and I look forward to expanding my knowledge further.

### What do you plan to do after graduation?

My dream is to win a Gates-Cambridge or Rhodes scholarship and get a Ph.D. in history at Oxford. I'd also love to travel all over the world before I settle down. I would love to be a history professor specializing in the Russian Empire and get to continue research while teaching. I am also considering attending law school and working as either a contract lawyer or international lawyer — this past summer I worked as an intern with a legal nonprofit called Good Counsel and learned a lot about the day-to-day work of lawyers.

My ultimate dream since I was a little girl is to be a published author. In an ideal world, I would stay home and write books all day — but for a day job, I find myself drawn to academia and law. I'm currently working on the third draft of my first novel with the goal of seeking publication! Being an author has always been my core ambition.

### If you could time travel to any historical moment or era, where would you go and why?

I would love to visit Vienna in 1913 and Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, to see the assassination of Franz Ferdinand and Sophie Chotek because it was a turning point in world history. I would like to travel back to late imperial Russia to meet Nicholas II and his wife Alexandra because I'd want to see how close any of the biographers came to understanding them. I would also be interested in meeting Vladimir Lenin because I find him to be a terrible but fascinating individual and witnessing his leadership in action would explain a lot about the Bolshevik Revolution and early Soviet Union.

# Professor Emine Evered awarded prestigious Fulbright Award

By Kelly Smith

Professor Emine Evered was awarded a Fulbright U.S. Scholar Award for Spring 2026. She traveled to Turkey, conducting research for her project, "Lucky Numbers: The Role of Regulated Gambling in Turkish Nation-Building (19th–20th Century)."

Dr. Evered's research explores how gambling and state-run lotteries shaped the Turkish Republic after the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1922.

She studies how a small, late-Ottoman lottery was transformed into a nationwide institution by a financially struggling new state, showing how lotteries functioned not only as a kind of "hidden taxation," but also as tools to encourage patriotism, nationalism, and aspirations for upward mobility.

The Fulbright Award builds on Dr. Evered's longstanding interest in how everyday practices, cultural norms, and social regulations became intertwined with questions of state power, national identity, and modernity.

"Turkey's economic nationalism framed the lottery as a national asset, protected under state monopoly," she said. "Unlike in the late Ottoman Empire, when European powers profited from key industries, the republican state ensured that no foreign actors benefited from the

lottery. It also portrayed itself as a corruption-free regulator at a time when lotteries abroad were often plagued by fraud."

"As a result, the lottery came to be seen as a national treasure, so much so that one parliamentarian later lamented its privatization as akin to 'killing the goose that laid the golden eggs.'"

While in Turkey, Dr. Evered is conducting extensive archival research at institutions such as the National Lottery Administration in Ankara, the Turkish National Library, and the Turkish Republican Archive. She also plans to visit iconic lottery stands that remain part of Turkey's urban landscape, including the famous shop of Nimet Abla (1899–1978), known as the "Queen of the Lottery" because of the extraordinary number of winnings linked to her stand.

Her work will culminate in a book-length manuscript tracing the evolution of the Turkish lottery from the mid-19th century to the present. She also plans to incorporate her findings into her MSU courses (History of the Modern Middle East and World History) and will develop a new undergraduate seminar on the comparative history of gambling and lotteries.



Yulian Wu, in front of a nephrite jade mountain carved in the Qing dynasty (1644–1912), Minneapolis Institute of Art.

# Yulian Wu awarded fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Study

By Kelly Smith

Associate Professor of History Yulian Wu was awarded a fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) in the School of Historical Studies for the 2025–2026 academic year. This prestigious membership allows for focused research and the free and open exchange of ideas among an international community of scholars at one of the foremost centers for intellectual inquiry.

During her stay, Dr. Wu will work on her research surrounding nephrite jade, the most coveted luxury mineral in Qing China (1644–1912), the last imperial dynasty in China.

"During my fellowship year at IAS, I plan to advance the research and writing of my book, *Gemstones for Governance: The Jade Industry and the Construction of Empire in Early Modern China*," said Dr. Wu. "I am honored to be a fellow at IAS, and I am grateful to the History Department at MSU for its support, which enables me to focus fully on research and writing."

Each year, IAS welcomes more than 250 of the most promising post-doctoral researchers and distinguished scholars from around the world to advance fundamental discovery as part of an interdisciplinary and collaborative environment.



A 1987 lottery ticket commemorating a decisive victory on August 30, 1922.

# Louis Moore appointed as Dean's Distinguished Senior Scholar



By Kelly Smith

The College of Social Science is pleased to announce that Dr. Louis Moore has been appointed in the Department of History as a Dean's Distinguished Senior Scholar at Michigan State University.

The program, established in 2018, promotes an inclusive scholarly environment for exceptional senior faculty who bring distinction to MSU, enhance the College's standing, and support the advancement of institutional access.

Prior to this appointment, Dr. Moore taught U.S. history, African American history, civil rights, and sports history at Grand Valley State University for 17 years.

"This is a dream job and opportunity for me. I feel like Magic Johnson in '79!" said Dr. Moore. "I can't wait to collaborate with my fabulous new colleagues and the fantastic students."

Dr. Moore's research uses the Black athlete as a window to examine U.S. history. He has published three books: *I Fight for a Living: Boxing and the Battle for Black Manhood, 1880-1915* (2017); *We Will Win the Day: The Civil Rights Movement, the Black Athlete, and the Quest for Equality* (2017); and *The Great Black Hope: Doug Williams, Vince Evans and the Making of the Black Quarterback* (2024). He is currently

working on a book project studying the decline of the African American baseball superstar.

In addition, he has created two audible lectures for *The Great Courses: African American Athletes Who Made History* and *A Pastime of Their Own: The Story of Negro League Baseball*. He is also co-host of The Black Athlete podcast.

Dr. Moore has shared his research and knowledge by writing for various online outlets, including *The New York Daily News*, *Vox*, *The Global Sports Institute*, *First and Pen*, and the *African American Intellectual Historical Society (AAIHS)*. He has appeared on NPR, MSNBC, CNN, and BBC Sports.

"We are absolutely thrilled to welcome Dr. Louis Moore as a Dean's Distinguished Senior Scholar. His groundbreaking scholarship, public engagement, and unwavering commitment to telling Black histories — particularly through the lens of sports — perfectly align with our mission to advance institutional access and inclusive excellence," said Dr. Nwando Achebe.

"Dr. Moore is a transformative thinker whose work will not only enrich our College community but also elevate our national and global standing. It is an honor to have him join us."



Photo Contest | Second Place

**Claire Schmidt**

Parthenon  
Athens, Greece

# Dr. Nwando Achebe honored with University Distinguished Professor designation

By Kelly Smith

In recognition of her outstanding achievements in teaching, research, and public service, Dr. Nwando Achebe has been named a University Distinguished Professor at Michigan State University.

The recognition is among the highest honors that can be bestowed on a faculty member by the university. Those selected for the title have been recognized nationally and internationally for their exceptional teaching, outstanding record of public service, and scholarly and creative achievements.

"In the words of the Igbo people of southeastern Nigeria, *mmadu bu chi ibe ya* — humans are destiny helpers to each other. This honor is not mine alone. It belongs to the communities and ancestors who entrusted me with their truths, and to the students and colleagues who have shaped and sustained my journey," said Dr. Nwando Achebe.

"Being named a University Distinguished Professor affirms the power of African-centered scholarship, oral history, and inclusive leadership. I receive it with deep humility and gratitude."

Dr. Achebe has been teaching at MSU since 2005, and is known for her groundbreaking work in African history, gender, and oral traditions. In addition to her appointment as the Jack and Margaret Sweet Endowed Professor of History, she also serves as Associate Dean for Access, Faculty Development, and Strategic Implementation; and Director of the Office of Institutional Access in the College of Social Science.

"Nwando Achebe's career exemplifies the ideals of a University Distinguished Professor, embodying excellence in scholarship, mentorship, public engagement, and institutional leadership," said History Chairperson and Professor Michael Stamm. "Through her visionary contributions, Dr. Achebe has transformed the field of African studies, inspired generational change, and deepened global understanding of Africa's histories and voices."

To learn more about Dr. Moore, visit [profloumoore.com](http://profloumoore.com)

# Celebrating faculty promotions

The achievement of tenure is one of the milestones in a scholarly career, and the History Department is very pleased to welcome three faculty members to the rank of Professor: Emily Conroy-Krutz, Emine Evered, and Charles Keith. These were well-earned recognitions of exemplary research, teaching, and service. Professors Conroy-Krutz, Evered, and Keith have contributed much to the department, the MSU community, and the larger historical profession in significant ways as scholars, mentors, and public servants.



## Dr. Emily Conroy-Krutz Professor of History

Emily Conroy-Krutz is a historian of the global history of nineteenth-century America. She has particular interests in American empire and the international dimensions of American religion and reform. She is the author of *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic* (Cornell, 2015) and *Missionary Diplomacy: Religion and Nineteenth-Century American Foreign Relations* (Cornell, 2024). Along with Michael Blaakman and Noelani Arista, she edited *The Early Imperial Republic: From the American Revolution to the U.S.-Mexican War* (Penn, 2023). At MSU, she teaches courses on American foreign relations, women's history, revolutionary America, religion, and legal history. She serves as undergraduate honors advisor and mentors the History Scholars.



## Dr. Emine Evered Professor of History

Emine Evered specializes in the modern Middle East with a particular focus on the late Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic. Her scholarship explores how everyday practices, cultural norms, and social regulations became intertwined with questions of state power, national identity, and modernity. Her first monograph, *Empire and Education Under the Ottomans: Politics, Reform and Resistance from the Tanzimat to the Young Turks* (I.B. Tauris, 2012; paperback: Bloomsbury, 2019), examines the transformation of education as both a tool of state authority and a site of resistance. Her second book, *Prohibition in Turkey: Alcohol and the Politics of Identity* (University of Texas Press, 2024), extends this interest in the politics of everyday regulation by investigating the history of alcohol production, consumption, and prohibition in Turkey. Her current project, *Lucky Numbers: The Role of Regulated Gambling in Turkish Nation-Building* (19th–20th Century), supported by a Fulbright fellowship, explores the history of the Turkish national lottery as both an economic instrument and a cultural project.



## Dr. Charles Keith Professor of History

Charles Keith is an historian of modern Vietnam. His research focuses on society, culture, and politics during the era of French colonial rule and decolonization. His first book, *Catholic Vietnam: A Church from Empire to Nation* (University of California Press, 2012), explores the evolution from a missionary-led to an independent national Church in Vietnam during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His second book, *Subjects and Sojourners: A History of Indochinese in France* (University of California Press, 2024), explores the sojourns of Indochinese colonial subjects in France and the influence of these circulations on colonial and postcolonial societies in French colonial Southeast Asia. At MSU, Dr. Keith is a core faculty member of the Asian Studies Center and an affiliated faculty member of the Asian Pacific American Studies Program. He is also co-Principal Investigator of the MSU Vietnam Group Archive, an NEH-funded project to digitize and disseminate materials generated by Michigan State's technical assistance programs in South Vietnam from 1955-1962.

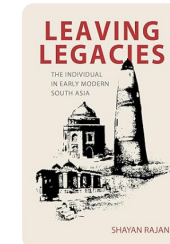
# New books & editions published by History faculty



## LaShawn Harris

*Tell Her Story: Eleanor Bumpurs & the Police Killing That Galvanized New York City*  
(Beacon Press)

On October 29, 1984, 66-year-old beloved Black disabled grandmother Eleanor Bumpurs was murdered in her own home. A public housing tenant 4 months behind on rent, Ms. Bumpurs was facing eviction when white NYPD officer Stephen Sullivan shot her twice with a 12-gauge shotgun. LaShawn Harris, 10 years old at the time, felt the aftershocks of the tragedy in her community well beyond the four walls of her home across the street. Now an award-winning historian, Harris uses eyewitness accounts, legal documents, civil rights pamphlets, and more to look through the lens of her childhood neighbor's life and death. She renders in a new light the history of anti-Black police violence and of the watershed anti-policing movement Eleanor Bumpurs's murder birthed. This deeply researched, intimate portrait of Eleanor Bumpurs's life and legacy highlights how one Black grandmother's brutal police murder galvanized an entire city.



## Shayan Rajani

*Leaving Legacies: The Individual in Early Modern South Asia*  
(Cambridge University Press)

*Leaving Legacies* is a fresh account of the individual in early modern South Asia. A gendered practice carried out by men, leaving legacies involved assembling three kinds of material traces: monuments, books, and sons. Men laid claim to individual distinction within an ethics of remembering worthy individuals by joining their traces with those of men past and reworking older legacies. Their legacies joined their present to the past and future, while also drawing women and non-elite men into a hierarchical order centered upon the individual during Mughal rule and after. This book shows that a concern for the individual self was not an exclusively western phenomenon. Rather, the practice of leaving individual legacies was a crucial means for the production and reproduction of empire, family, and social order in South Asia.



## Juan Javier Pescador

*Campus, Brand, and Circus: A Social History of College Sports (Second Edition)*  
(Cognella Academic Publishing)

*Campus, Brand, and Circus* provides students with a historical perspective on relevant issues regarding college athletics. The text chronicles the evolution of collegiate sport while exploring topics including youth rituals, masculine identities, gender markers, leisure cultures, racial hierarchies, and more. The second edition features two new chapters titled "College Athletes and the New Status Quo" and "New Horizons: A Promising Era?" that address the evolving natures of college athlete's legal status and the profound transformations precipitated by NIL and the transfer portal. *Campus, Brand, and Circus* provides insight into the world of college sports and explores vital trends in U.S. sports entertainment studies. It is ideal for courses in American sports history, college sports history, and the sociology of sports.



## Karrin Hanshew

*Germany Since 1945: Politics, Culture, and Society (Second Edition)*  
(Bloomsbury Publishing)

This text provides an unparalleled social, political and cultural history of Germany from the end of the Second World War to the contemporary moment. As well as carefully balancing the histories of East and West Germany, Peter C. Caldwell and Karrin Hanshew convincingly make the case for analyzing the Berlin Republic as a serious and distinct historical period in its own right. New content and features for the second edition include a chapter on recent German history and expanded coverage of the post-1990 era; enhanced material on topics including far-right sympathies through the decades and West German foreign policy beyond Europe; additional images and maps; and an updated introduction, online Instructor's Guide, conclusion and historiographical updates throughout.



# LEADR's year in review



**Dr. Gillian MacDonald**  
Director of LEADR

While we are no longer celebrating our 10-year anniversary at the lab, we've gone from strength to strength. 2025 has been a transformative year for LEADR, as we continued our celebration of 10 years while reaching an extraordinary milestone: **over 8,300 students served across more than 300 classes.** This

achievement reflects LEADR's growing role as a cornerstone of digital humanities education at Michigan State University and beyond.

## Class Integrations

### SPRING 2025 Capstone Exhibition

Professor Kirsten Fermaglich partnered with LEADR, the Zekelman Holocaust Center, and MSU Libraries to guide her HST 480 capstone seminar in developing "Americans and the Holocaust: A Michigan Perspective" — a companion exhibit at the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum. The students created both physical and digital exhibits, with the digital version hosted through LEADR for lasting access.

### 3D Printing Roman Coinage

Professor Noah Kaye's HST 331: Ancient Roman History 200 BCE to 500 CE class engaged in a group project where students integrate 3D printing into historical analysis. Each group 3D printed a roman coin, researched its heritage, and explored how 3D technology improves our understanding of objects and material culture.

### FALL 2025 Networks in Fake Archaeology

Professor Maddie Mackie partnered with LEADR to unpack how information spreads and connects across social media platforms. Students each developed a network graph that explored hashtags that followed pseudoarchaeology trends and scholarship over platforms like Bluesky, Twitter, and Threads.

## Speakers And Workshops

### Teaching Workshop with GenAI

In February, as part of the *Fear, Faith, and Praxis: Artificial Intelligence and the Humanities and Social Sciences Symposium* and Ethics Week 2026, LEADR hosted a workshop led by Sarah Frye, Danielle DeVoss, and Jeremy Van Hoff on teaching in a world with generative AI and best practices to follow.

### Dr. Sharon Leon Returns to MSU

Former MSU faculty member and CEO of Digital Scholar, Dr. Sharon Leon returned to campus to deliver some remarks as part of the LEADR10 celebration. Leon's insights into the evolution of digital humanities and how we go forward, resonated with students and faculty alike, highlighting how far the field has come since LEADR's founding in 2014.

### Data-Driven History Workshop: *Enslaved.org*

Dean Rehberger and Walter Hawthorne led a workshop on *Enslaved.org*, the groundbreaking database documenting the lives of enslaved peoples. This hands-on session explored how digital methods and data-driven approaches are transforming our understanding of the African diaspora and slavery's historical legacy, demonstrating the power of collaborative digital projects to recover marginalized voices.

## Student Achievements

### Cultural Heritage Informatics Fellowship

LEADR and Anthropology welcomed **8 new CHI Fellows** and **1 returning Senior Fellow** for the 2025-2026 cohort. This prestigious year-long program equips graduate students with skills to apply digital methods to cultural heritage, with fellows developing significant digital projects including mobile applications, digital exhibits, archives, and collaborative publications.

Undergraduate lab assistant Morgan Fox designed maps for the History Department's Professor Lisa Fine and her upcoming book on Detroit. She and Director MacDonald also received a second round of DH@MSU seed funding for their project on networking letters.

## External Partnerships

### Radical Historians Newsletter Digital Project

LEADR partnered with H-Net and the U.S. Intellectual History Society (USIH) to digitize and create a comprehensive digital project on the Radical Historians Newsletter. This collaboration preserves and provides access to an important resource in the history of radical historiography, making decades of scholarly activism available to researchers worldwide. Undergraduate

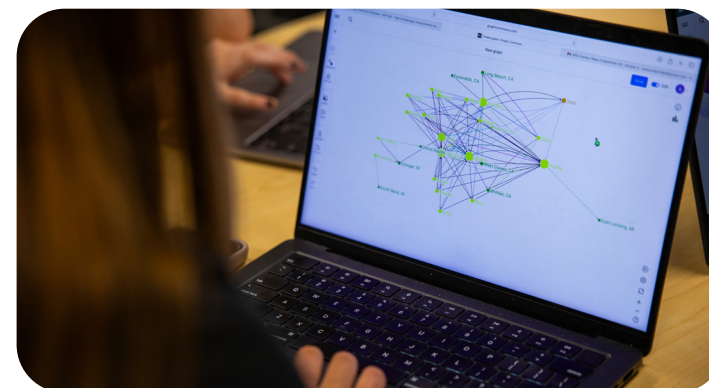
LEADR employee Maxine Levanduski, alongside graduate student London Hawes, LEADR Director Gillian MacDonald, and Executive Director of H-Net Jesse Draper presented progress on the project at USIH's annual meeting in Detroit.

## Looking Ahead

As LEADR enters its second decade, the lab remains committed to bridging traditional humanities education with cutting-edge digital competencies. Whether you're a digital novice or computer expert, LEADR offers the support, tools, and community to help you develop 21st-century skills for research, teaching, and the job market.

## Get Involved

- Explore student digital projects: [digitalprojects.leadr.site](https://digitalprojects.leadr.site)
- Schedule a consultation: [leadr@msu.edu](mailto:leadr@msu.edu)
- Visit the lab: **112 Old Horticulture, 506 E. Circle Dr.**
- Follow workshops and events: [leadr.msu.edu](https://leadr.msu.edu)



# Graduate program update

By Dr. Aminda Smith

The Department of History has a vibrant PhD program. Our students produce field-defining research in and about every major world region. U.S. News and World Report ranks our PhD program in African History at #3 and our PhD program in African American History at #17. Our students in all geographic fields regularly win prestigious research grants. Our graduates go on to work in many different sectors, including higher education, publishing, digital humanities, museums, consulting, and more. Our graduate students work closely with faculty to mentor undergraduates, and they are frequently recognized with teaching awards.

In Fall 2025, we welcomed nine new students into our graduate program.

We also said goodbye and celebrated as several students earned their PhDs and moved on to exciting new opportunities. Gloria Ashaolu was awarded a presidential postdoctoral position at UCLA; Caitlin Barker won a visiting assistant professorship at Boston College; Ryan Carty accepted a tenure-track professorship at North Carolina State University; Daniel Fandino was chosen as a digital humanities librarian at University of Central Florida; Marissa Knaak accepted a position at Michigan State University; Bernard Moore won a postdoctoral research position at University of Basel; McKayla Sluga landed an academic advising post at University of Michigan; and Dani Willcutt was selected for a role at the digital technology firm, Omeka.



## Photo Contest | Third Place **Will Chiampas**

“A New Horizon”

British Museum  
London, England

# Graduate student spotlights



## Estela Gonçalves de Souza

PhD candidate and an oral historian by training, Estela Gonçalves de Souza holds a BA and MA in History from the Federal University of Juiz de Fora (UFJF), Brazil. Her research focuses on Black Masculinities in the Brazilian pre- and post-emancipation eras, with a special focus on the city of Juiz de Fora, Minas Gerais. In the broad implication, historicizing Black masculinities in Brazil's post-emancipation will help to understand the complexity of the current political-racial project that operates in the elevated rates of violence against Black male subjects, along with racialized-gendered domination. This research explores how white privilege disadvantaged Brazilians of color during the

transition from slave to a free labor regime, a problem that continues to this day. As Brazil has the largest global population of Black subjects, save for Nigeria, it is fundamental that this work is debated in a predominantly diasporic space. Gonçalves de Souza is currently engaged in two projects at Michigan State University that discuss race, gender, diasporic relations, and memory.



## Joe Karisny

Last academic year, PhD candidate Joe Karisny received the College of Social Science Graduate Student Teaching Award for his dedication to instruction through innovative techniques and demonstrated excellence in teaching. He earned his bachelor's degree in history from MSU and focuses on Modern European history in a broad scope, in addition to the studies of interwar France and Italy. His research also centers around the study of transnational fascism and the “modern” right; the political imaginaries constructing ideas of Europe and race; the politics of population, consumption, and nutrition; and French and Italian political culture more generally. Karisny teaches a variety of courses in the History

Department, from U.S. business and economic history to an examination of modern labor and working-class history in our country from 1863 forward. Dr. Aminda Smith noted, “Joe is a talented educator who strikes that perfect balance between giving students high levels of support while challenging them to reach their highest potential... he advocates, first and foremost, that students should value learning for learning's sake.”



## Zachary Levy

Zachary Levy, a PhD candidate, has been studying the African slave trade since his undergraduate years at California Polytechnic University of San Luis Obispo. Introduced to the topic by historian Matthew Hopper, Levy began by helping digitize records of captured slave ships — work that “instantly hooked” him and led him to study Swahili, travel to East Africa, and volunteer in Kenya. Drawn to MSU's renowned African History program, Levy came to East Lansing to work with Professors Walter Hawthorne and Michelle Moyd. His research focuses on the lesser-documented history of the East African slave trade, particularly routes from inland Kenya near Lake Victoria to the coast. “I've

really enjoyed moving past just associating someone with a number or a ship, and actually listening to personal stories and learning about a specific case — who the person was, what their enslaved journey looked like, where their descendents settled,” Levy said. He hopes his work will expand knowledge of the region's complex histories and support projects like MSU's enslaved.org.

# New staff welcome

MSU's History Department is pleased to welcome three new staff members this year who help contribute to day-to-day operations and strengthen the support we provide to our students, faculty, and community.



Louisa Lee  
Business Manager

As the department's Business Manager, Louisa Lee plays a key role in keeping our community moving forward. In addition to overseeing our finances as fiscal officer, she guides HR processes, supports the Chair administratively, and supervises the History staff. Louisa's role touches many corners of the department, and her steady support helps create a smooth, welcoming environment for students, faculty, and colleagues.



Kelly Smith  
Communications Manager

Kelly Smith is the Communications Manager and plays a central role in sharing the department's stories with the campus community and broader public. She develops content that showcases faculty scholarship, spotlights student voices, and celebrates the department's many events and initiatives. Kelly brings energy, creativity, and a seasoned communications perspective to this work, supported by more than 20 years of experience in higher education marketing.



Troy Villanueva  
Undergraduate Advisor

Troy Villanueva is the new Undergraduate Advisor for the department. A former first-generation and transfer student, he brings empathy, patience, and a student-first approach to every conversation. Troy loves helping students navigate challenges, find direction, and feel supported throughout their MSU journey. Known for his holistic, appreciative advising style, he's always ready to listen and help Spartans be as successful as possible.



By Kelly Smith

History, Sarah McLennan often tells her students, is more than memorizing names and dates. It is about asking meaningful questions, examining evidence, and piecing together stories that help us understand how people lived, thought, and made decisions in the past.

As an assistant professor of history at Virginia State University, McLennan has built a career around the idea that teaching, research, and technology make history more accessible to more people.

"Most of my research has been about the ways that history can be experienced and shared with the public," she said. "Right now, that means thinking intentionally about how people encounter historical sources and how we can remove barriers to accessing them."

### Finding history beyond the classroom

McLennan's path toward public-facing historical work began at Michigan State University, where she double majored in history and English. She arrived on campus with a general love of the humanities, but no fixed plan for what might come next. What she found instead were opportunities that showed her how flexible and far-reaching a history degree could be.

While at MSU, McLennan volunteered in the collections department at the MSU Museum and took a course on folklore and oral history taught by then-museum director Kurt Dewhurst. She learned how historians gather stories, preserve materials, and think critically about how the public encounters the past. She also worked as a historical interpreter at Mackinac State Historic Parks and participated in a historic site fellowship in Deerfield, Massachusetts — experiences

that introduced her to history as a public-facing practice, not just an academic one.

"Coming into Michigan State, there were so many things that weren't even on my radar," McLennan said. "Museum work, oral history, creating databases... those experiences really expanded what I thought history could be and who it could be for."

### From public history to collaborative research

After graduating from MSU, McLennan pursued graduate studies at the College of William & Mary. There, she found herself increasingly drawn to teaching, serving as a teaching assistant and leading a public history field course that brought students to historic sites as part of their coursework. At the same time, she continued exploring community-engaged research, including oral history projects and institutional partnerships.

One of the most notable was her work with NASA's Langley Research Center, where she interviewed women who worked as mathematicians and computer programmers from the 1950s through the 1970s. The project contributed to a growing digital archive documenting women's roles in early computing — stories connected to the research that later inspired the book and film *Hidden Figures*. "It was a really powerful example of how local stories can have national significance," McLennan said. "Those interviews showed how important it is to preserve and share voices that might otherwise be overlooked."

### Digitizing the past to reach more people

Today, McLennan's research increasingly blends history with digital technology.



She is currently part of a collaborative grant project digitizing and transcribing 17th-century Virginia records that previously existed only on microfilm. The project will produce an online database and website that allows users to search records, view original documents, and explore connections through data visualization. The work brings together historians, digital archivists, librarians, computer scientists, and web designers, including collaborators from Michigan State University's MATRIX and Virginia Tech.

"These are really collaborative projects," McLennan said. "Having students, historians, and technologists all working together has been incredibly positive." The goal, she added, is to "make historical sources accessible so people can actually do research on their own and see the documents themselves."

The project also reflects McLennan's approach to teaching in an era increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence. While collaborators are experimenting with training AI models to help read 17th-century English, she emphasizes that access to real, tangible sources remains essential. "Projects like these put concrete evidence out front," she said. "They show that history is built from real documents, real people, and careful interpretation."

Looking back, McLennan credits her MSU experience with opening her eyes to the many paths a history major can take. That lesson now informs the advice she gives her own students. "Look broadly," she said. "There are a lot of things you can do with a history degree, and many of them aren't obvious at first. Internships, research projects, and experiences beyond the classroom are what helped me figure that out."



Photo credit: Jacqueline Hawthorne

## Walter Hawthorne named Director of Matrix: Center for Digital Humanities & Social Sciences

By Emily Jodway Patyna

Michigan State University's College of Social Science recently announced Dr. Walter Hawthorne as the director of Matrix: Center for Digital Humanities & Social Sciences. Dr. Hawthorne takes the helm after Associate Professor of History Dean Rehberger's 18 years of leadership.

Founded in 1997, Matrix is an internationally recognized and respected research center at Michigan State University. Its staff works with universities, museums, libraries, archives, and world heritage sites to digitize, preserve, and provide public access to collections of cultural and historical materials. Faculty and researchers have collaborated on a host of research projects across the humanities and social sciences through Matrix, many of which have had an Africa or African-diaspora focus. Through partnerships with scholars, practitioners, educators, institutions, and local community members, Matrix aims to create tools and digital experiences that engage researchers, students, and the public in critical questions about our collective past, culture, and heritage.

"It's a real honor to take the lead of an institution that's been around for so long and has produced so many important digital humanities projects,"

said Dr. Hawthorne. "I'm appreciative to our dean, Brent Donnellan, for the opportunity to direct Matrix, and to Dean Rehberger, the current director, for suggesting my name and getting me so heavily involved in the center, and for the staff who work here for being very supportive of me in this transition. We're really positioned to continue to thrive as a research center."

In addition to his role at Matrix, Dr. Hawthorne is a Professor of African and Digital History in the Department of History and African Studies Center. His research focuses on the history of Atlantic slavery and the Atlantic trade in enslaved people of African descent. He is the director of Enslaved.org, a discovery hub that links data from multiple universities, archives, museums and family history centers providing information about the lives of named enslaved and freed individuals, which is a prominent grant-funded project within Matrix. He is also Editor of the Journal of Slavery and Data Preservation. Dr. Hawthorne first became involved with Matrix in 2008 when he began development of Slave Biographies, an open access data repository of information on the identities of enslaved people in the Atlantic World that was the foundation for Enslaved.org.

"Since the birth of the internet, digital history and digital humanities have been exciting, cutting-edge fields in humanistic studies, and Michigan State and Matrix has really been right there on the forefront of this," Dr. Hawthorne said. "Matrix's projects digitize information and make data findable and analyzable on the internet, which is important for the preservation and accessibility of endangered materials. Matrix-based projects are freely accessible to anyone with a computer and an internet connection. On the internet, projects really takes on a life of their own. You never know who is going to find this wealth of data helpful."



Photo Contest | Fourth Place

### Jayson Otto

"The Last Believer and the Fruits of His Labor"

Israelite House of David - Benton Harbor, Michigan

## Undergraduate program update

By Dr. Emily Tabuteau

The study of history offers our undergraduate majors and minors and students from many other disciplines around the university more than just insight into the past. It provides a means of sharpening their research, writing, and analytical skills. Courses in our department introduce students to times and places as varied as ancient Greece, modern Russia, imperial China and Japan, the United States (of course), and South Asia. Thematic and special topics courses cover concepts, ideas and practices as diverse as Catholicism, sports, books, film, food and alcohol, law and the history of magic, witchcraft and the occult. Students learn

the fundamentals of research in primary sources, the construction of arguments and concise, persuasive writing. This set of skills prepares students for a wide variety of careers that rely on research and analysis, while also providing them with the foundation for acting as informed, engaged citizens in their local, national and international communities.

The past year continued to be a prosperous one for the undergraduate program in History. All three of our majors — standard History, Global History, and History: Social Studies Education — are doing well. The growing interest in the History: Social Studies Education major suggests that increasing numbers of students desire to teach Social Studies in secondary school. Our two existing minors, History itself and Defense Studies and Leadership, continue to grow, and as of this past fall History has become the home for the minors on Cities, African

Studies, Asian Studies, Asian Pacific American Studies, and Latin American and Caribbean Studies.

We have a large body of exceptional students and look forward to our awards ceremony in May to honor them all. We are also encouraging our strongest students to submit their work to the University Undergraduate Research and Arts Forum (UURAF) and/or to publish their work in the Undergraduate History Journal, which is sponsored by our History Club, under the guidance of Professor Ethan Segal, the faculty adviser. At the Spring 2025 UURAF, History major Tyler Richards won one of the highest prizes for a paper entitled "Art and Armor: How Accurate is the Bayeux Tapestry's Depiction of Arm and Armor at the Battle of Hastings?" which, I am delighted to say, was written in my senior seminar on the Norman Conquest.

# Graduate awards

## Don Lammers Graduate Award Henry Fagan

This award honors former professor of history and Head of the Honors College Donald Lammers by recognizing graduate students who plan a teaching career at the college or university level as exemplified by Prof. Lammers, who was a scholar and teacher of British empire and international relations. The graduate student in good standing who receives the award, promises – through their research interests and related activities – to improve our knowledge and historical understanding of the nature and dynamics of international and intercultural relationships in any geographical region or time period.

## Fred Williams Graduate Award Jayson Otto

This award honors emeritus professor of history Dr. Fred Williams and is intended to recognize a graduate teaching assistant who plans a teaching career in History at the college or university level, with preference given to the teaching of American history.

## Muelder-Lowe Graduate Award Jada Gannaway

This award is designed to recognize assistants who plan a teaching career in History (with preference given to the teaching of European history) at the college or university level.

## Harry Brown Graduate Fellowship in American History Gloria Ashaolu

Awards a graduate student of American history who has demonstrated academic excellence. Applicants will be assessed on their accomplishments at MSU (GPA, academic citizenship, time-to-degree trajectory) as well as on evidence of external recognition (grants and fellowships, participation in major conferences, peer-reviewed and invited articles).

## Jeff Rooney Paper Prize Joseph Eshun

This award is given to a graduate student who writes the best paper in a seminar in the year of the award.

## Irene Steindler Endowment in History Yun Zou

The award goes to an undergraduate or graduate student who has helped promote a culture of diversity on campus, or activities related to the History Department's participation in or collaboration with the university's Jewish Studies Program.

## Madison Kuhn Award David Marchionni

This award is intended to fund a second or third-year graduate student's pre-dissertation research. By doing so, it seeks to encourage students who have demonstrated the capacity to achieve educational and professional goals, the motivation to achieve these goals, and the initiative to seek opportunities to further their progress.

## Milton E. Muelder Graduate Fellowship in History Joseph Karisny

Milton E. Muelder Fellowship is awarded to a graduate student pursuing a Ph.D. in a field of European, Middle Eastern, and/or history of the Arabic/Islamic World. Recipients of the fellowship must be U.S. citizens and have received their master's degree or its equivalent. Preference will be given to applicants with reading knowledge of two European languages.

## The Sinclair and S. Suzanne Powell Scholarship in Transportation History Emmanuel Ankomahene

The Sinclair and S. Suzanne Powell Scholarship is designed to support an undergraduate or graduate student in the Department of History who has a strong interest in Transportation History.

# Undergraduate awards

## David T. Bailey Endowed Scholarship in History Delaney Cram

The award honors the late Professor Bailey, who was a professor of American intellectual and religious history in the Department of History at Michigan State for many years. The intended recipient is a disadvantaged student from the state of Michigan who is a history major at Michigan State.

## Blight History Scholarship Fund Megumi Togashi

Professor David Blight is a distinguished professor and scholar of History and alumnus of the MSU History Department. The Scholarship is intended to support students in the History Department and encourage students who have demonstrated the capacity to achieve educational and professional goals, the motivation to achieve these goals, and the initiative to seek opportunities to further their progress.

## Anthony and Mary Joan Woods Scholarship for Research Kara Hwang

Anthony E. Woods, Sr. and his wife Mary Joan Woods are the late parents of MSU alumnus Anthony E. Woods, Jr. Tony, Sr. served in World War II. After the war, he married Mary Joan, who was an English teacher with Tony at Mt. Clemens High School in Michigan. The couple later moved to Dearborn, where they both continued teaching. Anthony Woods, Jr. and Kay Samuelson Woods have established this scholarship in honor of Tony, Sr. and Mary Joan. The scholarship honors their legacy of teaching and philanthropy. It is the first established by a donor to support the History Scholars Program.

## Sandra Sageser Clark Endowed Scholarship in History Madalene Garneau

Sandra Sageser Clark is the Director of the Michigan Historical Center, a state agency that includes ten museums, the State Archives of Michigan and historic preservation, archeology and publications programs. She is the former editor of *Michigan History Magazine* and has served as president of the American Association for State and Local History. She is particularly interested in assisting students majoring in history who plan to enter careers that will help the public discover, enjoy and find inspiration in their heritage through museums, archives, publications, historical preservation, and other public history programs.

## Robert and Catherine Workman Endowed Scholarship in History Megumi Togashi

This award is intended for students who have demonstrated financial need as determined by the University's criteria, who are enrolled in the College of Social Science with a major in History, and who have achieved a minimum grade point average of 2.5, both cumulatively and in the last semester completed at MSU.

## Harry Reed Endowed Scholarship in History Andrew Palmer

This award is intended for undergraduate history juniors with either African American history or American history as their major area of emphasis. Harry Reed is an Emeritus Professor of History at Michigan State.

## The J. Morgan Sweeney Memorial Scholarship Katherine Dyal

This award honors the late Professor Sweeney, who led MSU Study Abroad Programs to Great Britain for many years. The award is for History students participating in the Department's Study Abroad Programs. Applicants should have an overall GPA of 2.75 and a History GPA of 3.25.

## The LoRomer Scholarship Korinne Dyer

The David LoRomer Prize, which is awarded to the best paper written by an undergraduate in a History course during the past year.

## The Rout-Williams Scholarship Lucy Burnett

The Rout-Williams Award in history remembers Dr. Les Rout, one of the first African American professors in the department, and Dr. Frederick Williams, former chair of the department, honors an outstanding history sophomore.

# History Scholars news

By: Dr. Emily Conroy-Krutz

In the late summer, our best students are invited to apply to join the History Scholars group for the coming academic year. Our program aims to help students build a community within the department, go deeper into their interests in history, and get to know the Michigan State University faculty and visiting professors a bit better. Membership in the group also makes scholars eligible for awards to advance their own research. This fall has seen an exciting lineup of events for the History Scholars. We kicked off the semester with a game of History Jeopardy, enjoyed a workshop on CVs and digital presence, and toured MSU's Special Collections. Some members of the group traveled to Detroit in early November to take part in the annual meeting of the Society for U.S. Intellectual History (S-USIH).

We look forward to even more fun in the spring semester, when we will be visiting with MSU Press, welcoming visiting scholars to campus, and more.

Our final event of the spring will feature presentations from this year's cohort of Honor's Thesis writers. Seven students have chosen to take on the significant work of writing a thesis this year. This is a year-long project that will result in a thesis of 75-100 pages. Topics range widely, with this year's group writing about free and enslaved labor in nineteenth-century Charleston, the culture of road trips, feminism and art, LGBTQ rights and the law, and more. All are welcome to join us in celebrating the work of these excellent students.

## 2025 THESIS WRITERS

### Anna LePage

"Malleable Minds, Social Solutions: Medicine and Myth in the Era of American Psychosurgery (1936-1977)"

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Ronen Steinberg

### Vera Love

"Exploring the Medicalization of the Queer Community"

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Aminda Smith

### Emma Riddle

"Advertisements, Bok, and the Ladies' Home Journal: The Reflection of Women's Culture and Ideals in the Ad Spreads of the Ladies' Home Journal, 1890-1910"

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Lisa Fine

### Brendan Zaleski

"Bound by the Motor City: African American Housing, Education, and Employment Inequalities in Early 20th Century Detroit"

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Justin Simard

### Max Martus

"*Françarménie*: France, Orientalism, and the Armenian Genocide"

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Ronen Steinberg

# History Club news

By Dr. Ethan Segal

The History Club is a registered student organization that brings together MSU students who share a passion for the past — and how it shapes the world around us. Through events, discussions, and campus collaborations, the club creates welcoming spaces for historical exploration beyond the classroom.

This year, the Club hosted a wide range of engaging programs, including debate and game nights, the annual Spooky Stories evening in October, and multiple installments of History Behind the Headlines. These sessions featured Dr. Matthew Pauly discussing Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine and Dr. Edward Murphy offering context on recent events in Venezuela.

A new event, Love and Heartbreak: Historical Tales of Romance and Tragedy Across Time and Around the World, also drew strong interest. Faculty presenters Drs. Hanshew, Waller, Rajani, Brockey, and Segal offered spirited storytelling and historical expertise that made the event an instant favorite.



Dr. Edward Murphy presents History Behind the Headlines in March. Photo credit: Megumi Togashi

# Doctoral dissertations completed in 2025

For all doctoral students, finishing a dissertation is a major life and career milestone, and it represents the culmination of years of thought and dedication. The History Department is very proud to acknowledge these achievements by eight students in 2025:

### Michael Albani

*Racializing Indigenous Society: Native Americans, Euro-Americans, and the Struggle for Authority in Greater Mackinac*  
(Advisor: Dr. Emily Conroy-Krutz)

### Caitlin Barker

*Cold War Cameroonian Diplomats on the World Stage: Forging Alliances with China and Taiwan*  
(Advisor: Dr. Nwando Achebe)

### Bernard Moore

*Land, Labour & Karakul in Namibia, 1910s-1960s*  
(Advisor: Dr. Peter Alegi)

### Ryan Carty

*Fasahan Dabbobi: Technology, Livestock, and Environment in West Africa, 1890-1980*  
(Advisor: Drs. Nwando Achebe & Jamie Monson)

### Dani Willcutt

*Serving it Up in the Capital City: Restaurant Labor and Culture in Lansing, Michigan, 1960s to 1990s*  
(Advisor: Dr. Helen Veit)

### Gloria Ashaolu

*An Outstanding Teacher, Civic Leader, and Author: The Education-Activism of Jane Dabney Shackelford*  
(Advisor: Dr. Pero Dagbovie)

### Marissa Knaak

*In the Shadows of Window Displays: The Industrialization of Fashion Retailing in Sheffield & Cologne, 1890-1914*  
(Advisor: Drs. Aminda Smith & Karrin Hanshew)

### Daniel Fandino

*Samurai in the Labyrinth: Japan in American Comic Books and Role-Playing Games, 1975-1995*  
(Advisor: Dr. Dean Rehberger)

## Support the Department

Please consider contributing to our department. Your gift will be used to help undergraduate and graduate students carry out research, present at conferences, and other scholarly activities.

**TO DONATE NOW VISIT:** [history.msu.edu](https://history.msu.edu)

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Are you a faculty, student, staff member or alumnus of the MSU Department of History? Contact the department with updates and news you want to share!

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